

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
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On April 28, 2011

Dear Prime Minister,

STES-INTERINDICAL (STES-I, Education Workers' Union-InterUnion) and the CONFEDERACION INTERSINDICAL (CI, InterUnion Confederation) condemn the repeated delays in the trial of the 31 public sector trade unionists and members of the teachers union Egitim Sen and the Confederation of Trade Unions of Public Employees (KESK) and urge the Turkish authorities to allow Gulcin Isbert, Secretary for Women of Egitim Sen, to travel abroad to participate in various international trade union activities and, in particular, to attend the 6 th World Congress of Education International, in which she will receive the Mary Futrell Hatwood award for Human and Trade Union Rights on 25 July 2011.

The 31 public sector trade unionists of Egitim Sen and KESK have been involved in legal proceedings since November 2009 for allegedly belonging to an illegal Kurdish organization, but more than 16 months have gone by and the ruling has not been pronounced yet, nor have the defendants been informed about the facts on which they are being prosecuted.

In June 2010, the Committee on the Application of Standards of the International Labour Organization, aware of the important restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly of the union, urged the Government to take all necessary measures to ensure a climate free of violence, pressure or threats of any kind to allow workers to freely and fully exercise their rights.

Despite the previously mentioned recommendations of the ILO and the many actions undertaken by the international trade union movement, the trial is still on and it has already been postponed for five times since November 2009.

The next hearing is scheduled for April 29, 2011.

STES-I and CI urge your Government to:

- Lift the ban on travelling and the rest of restrictions that prevent the defendants from engaging in union activities;
- Ensure prompt and fair process for the 31 accused of Egitim Sen and KESK;
- Fulfill its international obligations to guarantee human rights and trade union freedoms of workers and ensure a climate free from violence, pressure or threats against trade unionists.

On behalf of my organization, I sincerely hope that your Government will take action promptly to answer our requests. Both STES-INTERSINDICAL and the CONFEDERACION INTERSINDICAL have asked the diplomatic representatives of Spain in Turkey to monitor this issue.

Regards,

Gabriel Caldentey Ramos
Coordination of International Relations

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